

Navigating the Business Environment

A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Strategic Challenges and Governance in Kenya (2000–2026)

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ABSTRACT

The strategic and governance challenges faced by firms in Kenya's dynamic and often complex business environment are critical to national economic development, yet a comprehensive, longitudinal analysis integrating managerial perspectives with macro-level governance data is lacking. This study aims to identify and analyse the predominant strategic challenges and governance issues affecting businesses, and to examine the interplay between firm-level strategic responses and the evolving institutional governance framework. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative analysis of a longitudinal firm-level dataset was followed by in-depth qualitative interviews with senior executives and institutional stakeholders to contextualise and explain the statistical patterns. Quantitative analysis revealed that regulatory uncertainty was cited as a primary constraint by over 60% of firms in the sample. Qualitative data identified a core theme of strategic adaptation through informal networks, which executives utilise to navigate formal institutional voids and bureaucratic delays. The business landscape is characterised by a persistent tension between formal governance structures and informal adaptive strategies, with regulatory unpredictability remaining a systemic impediment to strategic planning and investment. Policymakers should prioritise enhancing regulatory predictability and transparency. Firms are advised to formalise risk assessment frameworks that explicitly account for governance volatility while maintaining adaptive relational capabilities. Strategic management, corporate governance, institutional environment, mixed methods, Kenya, business challenges This paper provides a novel, integrated analysis by combining longitudinal firm-level data with rich qualitative insights to delineate the mechanisms through which governance factors directly shape strategic decision-making in an emerging African market.

Keywords: *Mixed Methods Research, Strategic Management, Corporate Governance, Sub-Saharan Africa, Longitudinal Study, Business Environment, Kenya*

Article Highlights

- Longitudinal analysis reveals regulatory uncertainty as a top constraint for Kenyan firms.
- Identifies strategic adaptation through informal networks to bypass institutional voids.
- Examines the persistent tension between formal governance and informal strategies.
- Calls for enhanced regulatory predictability and formalized risk assessment frameworks.

Core Finding

The business landscape is defined by a systemic tension where firms leverage informal networks to adapt to formal governance unpredictability and bureaucratic delays.

Integrates longitudinal quantitative data with executive interviews for a novel, contextual analysis.

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

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